United States Patent Application

Appl. No. 10/635,732
Amdt. dated June 18, 2007
Reply to Office action of April 16, 2007
Page 2 of 12

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims for this patent application:

1.   (Previously Amended)   A file cabinet comprising:

a housing;

a file drawer mounted within said housing, the file drawer moveable between a first position inside of said housing and a second position extending outside of said housing so as to allow access to the contents of the file drawer;

a means for mechanical locking of said file drawer, the means for mechanical locking being movable between a locked position wherein said file drawer is unopenable and an unlocked position wherein said file drawer is openable and free to move between said first and second positions;

a biometric data scanner;

a computer processor capable of storing sets of biometric data, with the computer processor operatively coupled to said biometric scanner to enable comparisons to be made between scanned sets of biometric data and stored sets of biometric data; and

an actuator operatively coupled to said processor and to said means for mechanical locking,

whereby when said biometric data scanner scans a set of biometric data that corresponds to a previously stored set of biometric data and the set of biometric data is authorized to open said file drawer, said computer processor causes said actuator to move said means for mechanical locking from a locked position to an unlocked position for period of time of predetermined duration, such that said file drawer may be opened by movement of said file drawer between said first and second positions and thereby allow access to the inside of the file cabinet.

United States Patent Application

Appl. No. 10/635,732
Amdt. dated June 18, 2007
Reply to Office action of April 16, 2007
Page 3 of 12

2.   (Previously Amended)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said means for mechanical locking further comprises a substantially vertically disposed lock bar movable between a lower locking position and a raised unlocking position when said biometric data scanner scans a set of biometric data of an authorized user.

3.   (Original)   The file cabinet of claims 2 wherein said actuator comprises a solenoid operatively coupled to said lock bar.

4.   (Previously Amended)   The file cabinet of claim 3 wherein the predetermined duration of said period of time during which said lock bar is in the unlocked position is on the order of about 10 seconds or less.

5.   (Previously Amended)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said means for mechanical locking further comprises a substantially horizontally disposed lock bar movable between a lower locking position and a raised unlocking position when said biometric data scanner scans a set of biometric data of an authorized user.

6.   (Previously Amended)   The file cabinet of claim 5 wherein said actuator comprises a motor-driven cam operatively coupled to said lock bar to raise said lock bar to the unlocked position.

7.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 6 wherein the predetermined duration of said period of time during which said lock bar is in the unlocked position is indefinite, such that the lock bar stays in the unlocked position until said computer processor causes said cam to lower said lock bar into the locked position.

8.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said file cabinet further comprises a means for indicating the locked and unlocked positions of the means for mechanical locking.

United States Patent Application

Appl. No. 10/635,732
Amdt. dated June 18, 2007
Reply to Office action of April 16, 2007
Page 4 of 12

9.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said means for indicating the locked and unlocked positions comprises a visual indicator.

10.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said biometric data is at least one of fingerprint, iris, retina and voice recognition data.

11.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said means for mechanical locking returns to the locked position at the end of the predetermined duration of time.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 11 wherein said means for mechanical locking returns to the locked position while said file drawer is the second position, such that any other file drawer within said file cabinet is locked and cannot be opened until said computer processor causes said actuator to move said means for mechanical locking into the unlocked position.

13.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said computer processor additionally keeps track of the identifying biometric data of each user who attempts to gain access to the inside of said file cabinet by scanning the user's biometric data.

14.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 1 further comprising one or more additional file cabinets, each file cabinet including a local means for mechanical locking and a local actuator operatively coupled to the local means for mechanical locking and said computer processor, such that when said biometric data scanner scans a set of biometric data of an authorized user, said computer processor causes each local actuator to move each local means of mechanical locking into an unlocked position, thereby providing the authorized user with access to several file cabinets at the same time.

United States Patent Application

Appl. No. 10/635,732
Amdt. dated June 18, 2007
Reply to Office action of April 16, 2007
Page 5 of 12

15.   (Previously Presented)   The file cabinet of claim 14 wherein said computer processor identifies each authorized user and allows the authorized user access to specific file cabinets.